

June 13, 2017

A FARM STAND STORY: PADRON ELEMENTARY

June 28, 2017

Simone Benz, Food Access Projects Manager

It was the first day of the [Farm Stand](#) at [Padron Elementary School](#) and nerves were high. It was 1:45 p.m. and we were set to start at 2:00. "What if no one comes?" Nadia asks me with a nervous giggle, as she and her teammates lay out the summer produce from [Johnson's Backyard Garden](#); a beautiful rainbow of red tomatoes carrots, cabbage, zucchini, broccoli, romaine, kale, cilantro, red potatoes and purple onions. The silence of anticipation and excitement takes over.



A group of about fifteen second-graders gathers in the entranceway of the school. Immediately the silence is broken and nervousness is replaced by excitement and laughter. Their teacher is struggling to keep the group in order as they run over to the farm stand, filled with curiosity. Behold our first guests to the SFC Farm Stand at Padron Elementary. I introduce the Farm Stand team to the kiddos, and tell them a bit about what is going on. I'm barely into my presentation when one of the girls exclaims, "I grow these at home!" as she grabs a bunch of carrots out of the ground. Some of the other students are less familiar with some of the vegetables, pointing and asking "What's this? What's that?" The kids compliment the look and smell of the produce as their teacher buys a few items to wash and bring back to class to taste. Our first batch of customers seems satisfied. By this time, the parents running the Farm Stand have no sense of nervousness, but rather are feeling proud and inspired.

I asked them to share a bit about their story, and why they're excited about the Farm Stand at their school. Below are some highlights from our conversation.

Yazmin: "I am a mother and a parent leader at Padron Elementary. So when I first heard about the Farm Stand, I got interested because it is a way that we can bring fresh food, not only to our own families, to the whole community. This is a resource we can share."

Nadia (also a parent leader at Padron): "Our kids see us down there, they get excited too and they want to participate and help out. My son ate a cucumber at the farm stand the other day and he said, "It doesn't taste the same!" I'm surprised he ate it, raw, just like that. It was like he was eating a lollipop. All the kids smelled the cucumber and got excited about the fresh smell."

Yazmin: "It starts with the family first. Being a role model for my family is important for me. It grows into the community. Seeing that mom buying \$27 dollars of vegetables was amazing. She started calling all her friends and telling them to come. She was so excited that she got there early and helped us set the stand up the next week. The vegetables weren't even here yet, and she was there waiting for us to finish setting up."

The values the leaders of the Farm Stand expressed are tied directly to [SFC's Core Values](#) of collaboration, integrity, fun, resourcefulness, and empowerment. Yazmin, Nadia, and the rest of their team are confident that this Farm Stand will be a wonderful resource for their community, and are inspired to encourage other schools to take on the work.

If you are interested in learning more Farm Stands or ways to get involved, contact [Simone Benz](#) at simone@sustainablefoodcenter.org.